

TRANSPORTATION SAFETY COMMISSION

May 26, 2015

The Vienna Transportation Safety Commission (TSC) met in regular session on May 26, 2015, in the Vienna Town Hall Council Chamber, 127 Center Street S, Vienna, Virginia. Chairman Ed Somers opened the meeting at 8:00 pm with the following commissioners present: Leonard Ignatowski, Andrew Meren, Mary McCullough, Becky Allison, Beth Eachus, Sean McCall and Tamara Redmon; Vice Chairman Sharon Baum was absent. John Jay Sergeant, Department of Public Works (DPW), Jennifer Sigler, TSC Clerk, and Sergeant Mike Reeves, Vienna Police Department (VPD), were also present.

Approval of the April 28, 2015 meeting minutes

Commissioner McCall made a motion to approve the April 28, 2015 minutes.

Commissioner Meren seconded the motion.

Motion carried unanimously, 8/0.

Department of Public Works (DPW) Report/DPW Recommendations

At their February 2015 TSC meeting this commission heard a petition for improvements along Ayr Hill Avenue from Dominion Road to Lawyers Road and improvements along Center Street from Ayr Hill Avenue to Wilmar Drive. At their March 2015 TSC meeting, the TSC approved a motion to recommend to Town Council that DPW perform engineering for road improvements along the area of the petition. Also, at the March meeting the TSC asked DPW to perform a study on potentially alleviating the sight distance issues at the intersection of Lawyers Road and Ayr Hill Avenue.

The traffic studies performed by the Police Department show that Lawyers Road has a Vehicles Per Day (VPD) count of 13,051, West Street has 1,655 VPD and Ayr Hill Avenue has 2,749 VPD, which is a ratio of 7.9:1 and 4.7:1 respectively for West Street and Ayr Hill Avenue. None of the roads show that speeding is an issue. Per the Town of Vienna Traffic Accident Summary Report the intersection only has an average of 1.5 reported incidences a year. The sight distances for a 25 mph road are 280 feet for intersection sight distance and 160 feet for stopping sight distance.

DPW's investigation shows that if a 4-way stop is installed the intersection sight distance issue will be eliminated but the stopping sight distance for Lawyers Road would be hazardously reduced below the allowable 160 feet. DPW acknowledges that this intersection is difficult but due the lack of stopping sight distance, volume ratios of less than 3:1, a low accident rate and that there are several alternative routes available, the intersection does not warrant a four way stop.

DPW is still recommending the installation of handicap ramps and a crosswalk across Lawyers Road at Walnut Lane, which will alleviate sight distance issues for pedestrians, and the installation of crosswalk striping across Ayr Hill Avenue at Lawyers Road.

DPW also recommends that the intersection of Lawyers Road and Ayr Hill Avenue be converted into a mini-roundabout in the future when funding is available.

Mr. Sergeant explained the handicap ramps and crosswalks could be implemented before the engineering study was done.

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Commissioner Redmon asked if the crosswalks and ramps could be installed sooner than a mini-roundabout.

Mr. Sergent said as soon as he procures the funding, he would install the crosswalks and curb ramps. The mini-roundabout would have to wait for separate funding.

Commissioner Allison wanted to know if the mini-roundabout would be a problem because of the stopping distance problem at the intersection.

Mr. Sergent explained this would be an interesting mini-roundabout to design given the nature of the intersection, but that it is plausible. If the mini-roundabout works, it would solve the sight distance issues much better than a stop sign because there would be no stacking of vehicles. In addition, pedestrians would continue to use the crosswalk at Walnut Lane in order to cross Lawyers Road.

Commissioner Allison asked if the crosswalk at Walnut Lane would be far enough from the roundabout.

Mr. Sergent said travelling through the mini-roundabout is a 15 mph maneuver, so vehicles exiting the mini-roundabout are still going 15 mph which allows drivers more time to observe pedestrians in the crosswalk.

Commissioner Ignatowski inquired if the emergency route map could be updated and if it could be larger than the existing map. He expressed concern about emergency vehicles being able to navigate a mini-roundabout or multiple 4-way stop intersections.

Commissioner Meren asked how many crosswalks exist on Lawyers Road currently. He suggested all of the intersections along Lawyers Road should be investigated for their crosswalk potential.

Chairman Somers wanted to know if Mr. Sergent thought a mini-roundabout would be installed on Lawyers Road *before* the mini-roundabout at Park and Locust Streets.

Mr. Sergent replied no, the Park and Locust Streets mini-roundabout would be installed and observed before any additional mini-roundabouts would be installed elsewhere.

Commissioner Ignatowski wondered if any action was required at all at the intersection of Lawyers Road and Ayr Hill Avenue. He had observed the intersection during rush hour and noticed that very few vehicles turned left from Ayr Hill Avenue onto Lawyers Road. Most traffic turned right from Ayr Hill Avenue onto Lawyers Road, which was safe. There are other intersections in Town that are much worse and the time and money would be better spent elsewhere.

Jenny Stremmel of 210 Center Street N said she is in agreement with the proposal for a crosswalk at Walnut Lane.

Randy Bordelon of 114 Ayr Hill Avenue NW stated that he is also in agreement with a crosswalk at that location.

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Commissioner Meren asked that DPW perform a holistic study of Lawyers Road to see if any other crosswalks might be installed before a motion is made for this one crosswalk. He explained that he would like to see holistic studies of entire roadways done when crosswalks are requested in order to be proactive.

It was determined that proposing other crosswalks beyond the immediate vicinity of the petition would circumvent the petition process.

Mr. Sergent added he would need citizen input in order to know what to study.

Commissioner McCullough responded the proposal of the crosswalk is proactive because it was determined that a crosswalk at Ayr Hill Avenue was too dangerous; therefore a crosswalk at Walnut Lane is the proactive decision. She said she agrees with a more holistic approach however she knows that the TSC needs petitions from the public to prompt DPW to investigate specific situations. She said she does not know how a mini-roundabout would work at that intersection. She added that Ayr Hill Avenue is in bad shape and the ditch is scary.

Commissioner Eachus made a motion that the TSC recommend the installation of handicap ramps and a crosswalk across Lawyers Road at Walnut Lane NW, which will alleviate sight distance issues for pedestrians, and the installation of crosswalk striping across Ayr Hill Avenue at Lawyers Road NW.

Commissioner Meren seconded.

Motion passed unanimously, 8/0.

Receipt of Petitions and Communications from the Public

NONE

Bicycle Advisory Committee (BAC) Report

Chairman McCall reported the BAC discussed bicycle movements through Vienna festivals and would be putting together recommendations for the BAC before the next Vienna festival, Oktoberfest.

Commissioner Allison asked if there was a way to request that the Park Authority widen the bike path in the festival area so that there could be a "pedestrian only lane."

Chairman McCall said as part of the Community Center renovation, the path would be widened from Park Street to the Locust Street trail.

Commissioner Ignatowski asked if there could be a "dismount policy" for cyclists next year.

Chairman McCall suggested the Town contact the Park Authority to see if they would make a rule that cyclists dismount when there is a fair. Then the Town would be within their right to enforce the rule. He requested that there be a BAC agenda item next month regarding the Maple Avenue Corridor and bicycle parking regulations. The BAC also discussed the Marshall Road bike lane.

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Pedestrian Advisory Committee (PAC) Report

None. A new member is needed for this committee.

Reports of Commissioners

Commissioner Ignatowski asked why the “no parking except Sunday mornings” was not being enforced in the 500 block of Orchard Street. People park there during the week and on Saturdays; however tickets are rarely given to the vehicles. He, himself, prepared the petition to have the no parking restrictions placed on this street several years ago. He has also reported six separate violations to the Police, however it seems that they have a “good neighbor policy” and ask the people to move their cars instead of issuing tickets. Only one of the six that were reported received a ticket. He would like the TSC to reconsider the no parking decision because it is being ignored by drivers and not being enforced by the Police.

Chairman Somers asked if a petition would be needed to change the existing conditions.

Mr. Sergeant pointed out that the Citizen’s Guide to Traffic Calming states that traffic calming measures that have been previously implemented by the TSC may be removed after one year if a petition is presented to the TSC, following the same rules as for the initial petition. Therefore, a new petition from the residents of the 500 block of Orchard Street can be presented to request removal or modification of the no parking restrictions since it has been over a year since the previous decision.

Commissioner Meren added that if the TSC made a motion to remove the parking on one side of the road and six months later it is determined that it is not working as planned, the TSC can revisit the issue and reverse or modify their decision to improve the problem.

Commissioner McCullough explained that the Citizen’s Guide also states that regarding modification and removal, the TSC can do something if it finds that the measure causes a hazardous situation; however if there is not an apparent hazard, then someone in that area would have to start the petition process again.

Commissioner Ignatowski asked Sergeant Reeves why his call to the Police on Saturday regarding an illegally parked vehicle on Orchard Street did not result in a ticket.

Sergeant Reeves said he was not working on Saturday, however he could check back in the Police records to see what happened with the call.

Chairman Somers asked Sergeant Reeves if officers could choose to give a ticket or not give a ticket.

Sergeant Reeves responded the officer’s responsibility was to see if there was a violation. If there is a violation, he or she does not just drive away; either the officer will talk to the violator and if the violator will comply and move then the officer does not have to issue a ticket or the officer can issue a warning ticket or the officer can issue a real ticket. The officer would never respond to a call and not do one of these three things. In addition, the complainant has a right to be seen by the responding officer.

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Commissioner Meren requested that DPW/Mr. Sergent take a look at the sidewalk and ditch on Nutley Street between Kingsley Road and Marshall Road SW. It is dangerous for pedestrians and cyclists.

Commissioner McCullough agreed that the area is dangerous.

Commissioner Allison asked what happened to the bollard that was in the middle of the road in front of Vienna Elementary School, and if it could be put back.

Mr. Sergent explained that DPW did not install it, did not know where it came from and removed it because it did not comply with the standard.

Commissioner Allison requested that a correct one be installed at that location because it made crossing the street there much easier.

Mr. Sergent said he would look into that possibility.

Commissioner Eachus wanted to know the status of the Marshall Road sidewalk.

Mr. Sergent said he would check on it.

Commissioner McCall was glad to know that the intersection at Ayr Hill Avenue, West Street and Lawyers Road would continue to be investigated because it is such a difficult area to maneuver. Additionally, a delivery man called him to say that he could not make a delivery to his house because of the "no trucks" signage on his street.

Sergeant Reeves clarified that the law states that trucks can make a delivery to a road that is posted "no trucks," they just have to use the primary roads as much as possible.

Commissioner Redmon had nothing to report.

Report of the Chairman

NONE

Adjourn

Meeting adjourned 9:27 pm